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May 31, 1966

Miss Sally Belfrage
16 Charles St.,
New York, N.Y. 10014

Dear Miss Belfrage,

Farm notes from reputedly progressive-minded people have been scant recently and your kind expressions are therefore doubly welcome. The sad fact is that I have been slandered, blackmailed and otherwise threatened by people who should have known better and who falsely allege my work is not my own. They are oblivious to the facts, beginning with the completion of the book pursuant to agreement more than 15 months ago and its clear record through more than 60 US publishers since then. Unless they give me no choice, I shall not do anything publicly, but possibly you can understand, with the history of the book, how it makes me feel. I have yet to get a single review or even an indication of one from any of the smaller publications save Agels, and he was very nice in a long phone call. Although I gave out about a thousand dollars worth of press copies, I have fewer than a half-dozen acknowledgements from the smaller journals, and not all pleasant. It has not been encouraging, especially because if they'd read the book with care they'd see things they do not imagine.

We did all this on credit, borrowing the down payment to the printer, to whom the next installment, to pay for the paper, is due in 10 days and I haven't the slightest idea where it'll come from. Then about \$3,000 some time around the 20th.

I do not believe there is any libel in the book. The basic material is privileged. After you read it, I'd appreciate your comments. Remember, this is the first draft, without benefit of commercial editing.

One of the problems is distribution. Supposedly I have a distributor in DC but I've seen nothing he's done while I've been busy on other things. The 19 store I spoke to accepted 743 copies, which is encouraging, as is the sale the few places I've been able to check.

There was almost a full page in the Washington Post Sunday, with eight columns across the top of the front page. The piece was a blatant attempt at apology for the Commission, coming from a former high staffer who, fortunately, lied, as the staff did in the hearings and in the Report. I'm hopeful, that this time they went too far, for they may have compromised a major paper. Perhaps it will help smoke the whole thing out. I've already delivered the quoted documentation in total refutation and am waiting to see what happens. The whole thing will explode, I believe soon and I hope the right way. This could be unbelievable if it happens honestly and terribly if it doesn't. I'm mailing the two books separately at but a few pennies difference in cost because one may get through faster. If you can help in distribution (I expect to approach a large NY distributor this weekend in DC) I'd certainly appreciate it. I had hoped, foolishly, alas, that some of the more fortunate intellectuals would interest themselves in the lack of freedom of press here, I believe clear. Many thanks. Ten bucks total.